

Two ball 'Match-Play' croquet

CA Marketing Committee, updated Mar 2020

- Gets people playing something like Association Croquet in minutes with minimal coaching.
- A proposed beginner-friendly variation for use during taster sessions (e.g. National Croquet Week), corporate events, and integrated club days between AC/GC sections.
- Similar enough to garden croquet to contain roquet-croquet sequence expected by non-croquet-players; introduces GC scoring system.
- Offers enough opportunity for stroke variety and break play to allow people to see the tactical richness that could develop

Original credit: Samir Patel (<http://www.oxfordcroquet.com/coach/matchplay/index.asp>)

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Notes for organisers

(a) Keep it simple. People need to be able to pick it up very quickly with minimal instruction. Less than 5 minutes is the aim. Most of the rules are the ones that non-croquet-players expect (e.g. damaging the lawn is a fault)

(b) Include croquet strokes. Make it possible to play breaks and invent some tactics. Croquet is not (just) about bashing oppo as far away as possible, but it allows you to do some of that. Hence not wanting to just play GC.

(c) Stop players putting around the court. Hence the GC scoring scheme, because beginner level one-ball becomes putting.

(d) Keep it close enough to Association Croquet so that one can demonstrate the skill of break play if challenged!

What next?

We suggest following up a taster session with a rolling introductory course, with a fee deductible from subscriptions should anyone choose to join your club after.

Encourage people to come back with family, friends, and work colleagues for one-off sessions. Private or corporate hire are good ways to get more people playing and to generate additional income for your club. The same if you attract a teacher - they might like to organise croquet as a PE session.

New to croquet? Here is a quick-start version to our sport

How it will all work

It will all be quite informal, and quite straightforward. Pick up a mallet, a ball, find an opponent and away you go!

We will keep finding you new opponents who are doing about as well (or badly) as you are.

Rules

To let everyone pick the game up quickly, some simplified rules are over-leaf. If you're not sure about anything, please ask.

It isn't normal to have a referee except when required for specific shots. If you're taking things that seriously, we can adjudicate.

How the full game differs

- Players have two balls each rather than one. This allows much more complex tactics and break-play to be employed.
- The hoops are narrower. At the top level, a clearance of only 1/32" is typical.
- Association Croquet (AC): Each ball has to run all hoops itself, rather than all balls being for the same hoop.
- Golf Croquet (GC): There is no roquet-croquet-continuation sequence, i.e. 1 shot per turn. Balls that go off lawn are replaced on the boundary.

Some hints

- Hold the mallet near the top; use gravity to assist with a "pendulum swing". You'll be able to hit the ball harder and more accurately. Other than that, there are many ways to hold a mallet. Find one that's comfortable for you.
- Croquet strokes can be played in a variety of ways to change the ratio of distances the two balls travel. Holding the mallet higher up with less follow through will increase the ratio, and vice-versa. If you play at an angle, the balls will travel in different directions; remember the requirement for both balls to move in a croquet stroke.
- Taking risks to make progress yourself is usually more successful than focussing on stopping your opponent.

Some myths

- Balls that leave the court get replaced; sending balls into the hedge has no merit.
- Putting your foot on a ball was banned over 100 years ago.

I enjoyed myself! What next?

- Find your nearest club to sign up for a beginners course - see www.croquet.org.uk.
- Bring a friend - it's more fun learning together!
- Book a private event for friends/family/work colleagues.
- Follow the Croquet Association on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram - @croquetengland
- Croquet videos at www.youtube.com/CroquetEngland
- Watch some top-class croquet this summer:
 - British Championship (GC) - 16 - 21 June, Southwick, Sussex
 - British Championship (AC) - 4 - 12 July, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

“Two-Ball Match-Play Croquet” Rules

1. Games are between two players, who have one ball each: Several games can take place on a lawn at one time; if another game gets in the way, wait or temporarily remove the obstructing ball.
2. The winner of a coin toss chooses to go first or second, the other player chooses the ball colours. When first played into the game, each ball is played from either *A-baulk* or *B-baulk* (see diagram), which is one yard (approximately a mallet’s length) from the boundary.
3. The objective is to score (*run*) more hoops than your opponent. Once a hoop has been scored, play moves to the next hoop; hence, the game is best of 13 points (the last point is for hitting the peg) or first to 7.
4. Hoops are run in the order and direction shown on the diagram (the blue- and red-topped hoops define the court’s orientation). If a ball gets stuck in a hoop, it may complete scoring the point in another turn. You can score points for the other ball by knocking (*peeling*) it through the hoop.
5. At the start of each turn, you have one stroke.
 - a. If you score the relevant hoop, you gain an extra (*continuation*) stroke, which is played from wherever your ball came to rest after scoring the point. This is as if you are starting your turn again, although you are now for the next hoop.
 - b. If you hit (*roquet*) the other ball you gain two further strokes.
 - i. In the first stroke, place your ball in contact with the other ball and play a stroke. In this (*croquet*) stroke, both balls must move and stay on the lawn; otherwise, your turn ends.
 - ii. In the second (*continuation*) stroke, you play your ball from where it came to rest after the *croquet* stroke.
 - iii. Having *roqueted* a ball, you may not do so again during that turn unless you first run your hoop.
 - c. Through a combination of these two methods, it is possible to construct a break in which many points are scored in a turn
6. Any ball that goes out of court (i.e. crosses the boundary) is replaced one yard (approximately a mallet’s length) in from the boundary.
7. Faults. If you commit any of the following errors, your turn ends and your opponent has a choice of whether to leave the balls where they ended up, or having them replaced.
 - i. Hitting your ball more than once in a stroke
 - ii. Any contact with a ball other than your ball during a stroke
 - iii. Hitting your ball other than with a face of the mallet
 - iv. Any shot that damages the lawn

